

ELL Parent-Teacher Conference Guidelines

Many of our refugee families may be unfamiliar with the concept of Parent-Teacher Conferences or may feel intimidated by talking to teachers. It is our goal to make parents feel comfortable meeting with teachers, proud of their students' accomplishments in school, and supported by the school district. Eventually, we would like parents to be empowered to participate in their children's educations independently.

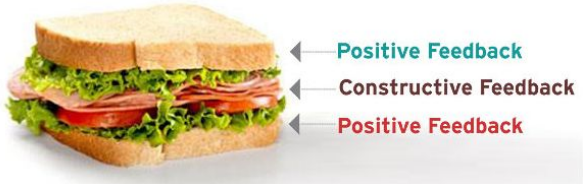
One of the biggest challenges of Parent-Teacher Conferences is the language barrier. [By law¹](#), we must provide translation services for any parent who requests it. Because of the limited number of interpreters available for hire in our district, many Parent-Teacher Conferences will be conducted using a phone translation service called "[Language Link](#)." **Please remember conferences will take about twice as long (30 minutes) per student because of the interpretation.**

Please take a moment to read through these guidelines to know what to expect and how to conduct these conferences.

You can also watch <https://tinyurl.com/ELL-PTC> (must be signed into mcpsmt.org account).

How to Conduct Parent-Teacher Conferences with ELL Families

The MOST IMPORTANT part of this conference is for families to feel like their children are **SAFE** and **WELCOMED** at school. Just like any parent, these parents want to know that their children are being supported academically, socially, and emotionally throughout the day.

Do's	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greet the parents at the front door, if possible• Explain your role in their child's education (teacher, tutor, counselor, etc.)• Thank the parent for taking the time to meet with you• Talk directly to the parents, rather than the translator, during the conference• Use the "Compliment Sandwich" technique. This allows the parents to hear about successes and feel like their students are supported in this environment  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss student's social and emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assume the parents know who you are and what your role is• Talk directly to the translator during the conference (example: "Will you please tell her that her daughter...")• Say that the student cannot participate in school because of a lack of English or educational background• Show Standardized Test Scores (unless the scores are really good!)• Show all of the paperwork created by MCPS to explain STAR, ELA, etc.• Assume parents' educational backgrounds. Some parents are very well-educated, some have not had access to schooling, and some are somewhere in between• Discuss poor behavior that has been resolved, unless this is a follow-up to previous conversations with the parent

¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf>

wellbeing (you can even offer to help facilitate a “playdate”)

- Ask parents for advice on how to handle poor behavior (example: “What can I do to motivate your son during Math class?”)
- Talk about short-term goals (academic, social, emotional, etc.) that you can follow-up on with the parent either at the next conference or by phone
- Thank the parent for coming to the conference. **Emphasize that their student is safe, welcome, and an asset to your class**
- Only if using **Language Link**: fill out the paperwork. You will need to record the start time and interpreter code at the beginning of the call and the end time at the end.
- Only if you are conducting a full-family conference: It is a good idea to have an agenda of the order in which you will talk about each student. Since these are family conferences, you will need to wait. If you have to leave part-way through the conference, please explain this up-front and plan accordingly.